

**Space Family Education, Inc.
Board of Director's Open Meeting**

Director Report

Staffing

Resignations:

Ms. Nicole Carter, our sign language teacher, resigned.

New Hires:

None

Other:

No report

Operations

Facility:

NASA facility people fixed the ductwork in the building over the Christmas holidays. We will not know how well it works until the hot months. They also completed the drainage project in the older kids playground. It seemed to work very well, but we still have some stagnant water after a good rain out by the sandbox area.

Special Events:

The teachers had a very nice annual Christmas dinner at Chabuca's.

The Snow Day had been moved to January 27th.

Ms. Hirning is planning something to do for Mardi Gras – to be announced (TBA) later.

In March the pre-K and Kindergarten children will have a fieldtrip to the rodeo. The Houston Rodeo and Live Stock Show will host tours for school children, and this year we applied for it in time. More details will come later.

Other:

The building has a hole in the exterior wall. Ms. Hirning will submit a work order for NASA to repair it. Ms. Hirning will submit work order to repair dips in the playground as pointed out by Ms. Thompson-Fowler.

Committees Report

Education Curriculum

No report

Playground

Ms. Thompson-Fowler is working with Mr. Kelly to identify holes and dips in the playground, and offered to repair the ground if NASA does not address it. She also pointed out a potential safety hazard with the broken fence between the two playgrounds and a piece of metal sticking up from the ground. Mr. Kelly offered to assess the playground and fix what he could.

Mr. Kelly also pointed out maintenance needed on the sandbox, and suggested how to fix it. Sand and dirt inside and outside of the sandbox had eroded or were displaced by the children. Ms. Hirning said that she would submit some work orders to NASA to see what they would repair. Ms. Hirning also said she could buy bags of sand with money raised from fundraisers and parents could put them in the sandbox. Mr. Kelley offered to buy the sand by truckload and maybe some dirt to repair the sandbox.

It was decided that Ms. Thompson-Fowler and Mr. Kelly would survey the playground for repair needs, Ms. Hirning would submit work order to NASA to repair whatever belongs to the facility, and the Childcare Center would pickup what not covered by NASA. Many parents in the room offered to help (some volunteered their spouses' help).

Newsletter and Webpage

Ms. Hirning will let Ms. Rapley know when to put together the next release of the newsletter.

Room-1

No report

Room-

No report

Room-3

No report

Room-4

No report

Room-5

"No problem."

Room-6

No report

Room-7

No report

Room-8

No report

Room-9

The meeting had an open discussion to review the child-teacher ratio in Kindergarten after a recent incident and concern. The Board reminded parents that last January (2003) the policy was changed to allow up to 20 children in Kindergarten to accommodate the demand. For this school year it was decided that the two teachers, Ms. Ramsey and Ms. Jody, would be able to manage the 19 children enrolled. However, based on a recent suggestion from a parent, the Board offered this opportunity to discuss the issue and to review the recommendation to reduce the child-teacher ratio in kindergarten.

After some background information was provided the child-teacher ratio in the kindergarten room was discussed. Ms. Lewis answered that; in general, the kindergarten child-teacher ratio in public schools is approximately 23:1, and at best 10:1 in private schools. The Board believes that the current ratio is comparable to other private schools or better, and that it is adequate. Some of the discussion went off on differences between parents.

In answering a question/concern the Board explained that not all incidents are reported, or filed. Some incidents/issues may have been addressed and resolved between the parents and teachers, and those cases were not reported or filed. The Board clarified that complaints against teacher/staff are indeed filed in the teacher/staff file, and that either the Director or the Board responds to all formal complaints. The Board reminded parents that the Childcare Center has an 'open door' policy regarding grievances. Any issue or concern should be brought to the attention of those involved (e.g. teacher, staff, parent) and the director. If the issue or concern is of serious matter it should be brought up to the Director and the Boards to investigate and resolve appropriately. The discussion then returned to the child teacher ratio.

Interested parents discussed the implications of having a third teacher in the room. However, it was agreed that the issue/concern is not academic, and that the Board should move forward with a motion to put together all the necessary data on the cost and plans for the third teacher. The consensus is that the third teacher would only need to be an adult helper (teacher's aid), the teacher would only need to be present during school hours (i.e. 8am-3pm), the teacher would only be needed for remainder of this school year, the extra cost would only impact the kindergarten tuition, and that the current kindergarten parents would have the final decision on this matter by voting on the proposal. Mr. Nguyen had the action to prepare an information packet on the proposal for the kindergarten parents to vote on. Ms. Hirning and Ms. Gomez had the action to determine the cost and plans for the proposal. The discussion was tabled.

A question was asked whether the equipment and supplies in the kindergarten room are for school/curriculum material or are available for the children to play with, and why are the children not allowed to play with the toys and play centers in the room after 3pm? The parent explained that it was Ms. Ramsey's rule. Ms. Hirning said that she would ask Ms. Ramsey to determine the reasons for the restrictions and figure out what are allowed for the children to play with.

Board Members Report

Policies and Procedures (Jennifer Lewis)

Ms. Lewis reported that we lost St. Claire Catholic Church as an evacuation site out through Gate 4. Ms. Lewis asked parents if they know of any Church for facility that would consider letting us use their facility as a potential evacuation site in our emergency plan. Some parents offered suggestions and to work with Ms. Lewis after the meeting.

Treasurer (Jennifer Mason)

Absent – reported by Susan Gomez

Ms. Gomez reported that annual audit is almost done.

Ms. Gomez reported that we got a new commercial liability insurance policy (our old insurance company did not renew our policy, and that the insurance for the school bus increased about \$8K for this year.

Ms. Gomez is doing financial report while Ms. Mason is out on maternity leave. She will have the financial report for next month meeting.

Secretary (Louis Nguyen)

No report

Vice President (Erica Vandersand)

No report

President (Susan Gomez)

No report

SFEI Members Report

Walk-ons

One parent suggested a project for the upcoming Parents Workday, pegs or hooks along the wall for backpacks.

Old Business

Ms. Hunt (NASA liaison) reported that she does not have any new news on the old facility. Ms. Hunt said that Ms Leti Poole is trying to delay the demolition until after the summer.

One parents asked for confirmation on the restriction on what brand of crayons and sidewalk chalks. It was agreed that the crayons and sidewalk chalks should be limited to Crayolla brand to avoid other brands that may contain lead. The school supply letters will specify which brand along with an explanation for parents.

A suggestion was brought up to reconsider creating pre-package school supplies packets for parent to purchase, instead of having to find and purchase all the required school supplies. Ms. Rodriggs volunteered to investigate.

Ms. Thompson-Fowler reported that the computers from the computer labs and some in the rooms would be refreshed on January 28th, 21 computers in all. They will come with flat panel monitors, and a new printer for Ms. Hirning.

New Business

None

The next meeting will be February 19, 2004
Room 122 JSC Child Care Center - 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM